

Talent

Multiplatinum Life: Lionel Can't Slow Down . . .

BY LINDA MOLESKI

NEW YORK Lionel Richie reached No. 1 on the Top Pop Albums chart last week with his latest Motown release, "Dancing On The Ceiling," but there isn't much time to celebrate that feat. The superstar is involved in a variety of promotional activities to keep himself in the public eye this fall.

"To prevent overexposure, you tend to have a burst of activity and

then pull back," says manager Ken Kragen. "Lionel's been pretty quiet for a while, with the exception of the Academy Awards performance. He spent a year and a half making this record. Now we'll go into a bit of a burst for October and November and then pull back for a while."

Richie kicked off a 40-city U.S. "Outrageous" tour Sept. 29 in Phoenix, Ariz. More dates are tentatively set for next summer, says Kragen.

With 20 tons of equipment, the

show's highlights include rising stage platforms and musicians who dance—you guessed it—on the ceiling.

The busy fall schedule for Richie also calls for an upcoming HBO special—to be released on home video cassette later this year—and an appearance with Alabama on the upcoming Country Music Awards.

Richie teamed with Alabama on one of the songs from "Dancing On The Ceiling." Of the country association, Kragen says, "Well, Lionel's gone for that in the past. But I think

he finally has a record that could go to No. 1 on the country charts."

The album's title track peaked at No. 2 on the Hot 100 Singles chart in September, and Kragen says its expensive videoclip has provided invaluable exposure.

Hopes are high for the just-released followup single, "Love Will Conquer All," to hit the top spot, but, says Kragen, "There's got to be numerous hits on this album."

"Dancing On The Ceiling," which was produced by Richie and James Anthony Carmichael, attempts to ap-

peal to a wide variety of listeners, says Kragen.

"What Lionel went for with this album was to make sure that it covered a broad spectrum of tastes," says the manager. "He tries to push it a little farther each time without abandoning what the base of his audience is."

According to Kragen, Motown is targeting sales of 15 million to 20 million units worldwide for this release. Richie's last album, "Can't Slow Down," which is still on the Top Pop Albums chart, has reportedly sold between 10 million and 15 million copies.

... And Tina Puts Success Behind Her In The Studio

NEW YORK Though "Private Dancer" registered megaplatinum worldwide sales and produced a run of hit singles, Tina Turner tried to put that success behind her while recording her new Capitol album, "Break Every Rule," says Lindsay Scott of the Roger Davies Management organization.

"I think it's always hard to follow up an album as huge as 'Private Dancer,'" says Scott. "That will always be the one special album of Tina's career, no matter if she does another that sells three times as many."

So, she didn't go out and try to record an album that would top it. She just went in to record another album.

"Break Every Rule" climbs to No. 16 on this week's Top Pop Albums chart, while its first single, "Typical Male," is at No. 9 on the Hot 100 Singles chart.

Like its predecessor, the new album boasts an impressive list of producers and songwriters, including Terry Britten, Mark Knopfler, Rupert Hine, David Bowie, Bryan Ad-

ams, and Bob Clearmountain.

"On every level, the philosophy was the same as the last album," says Don Grierson, Capitol's vice president of a&R. "And that was to get the best with regard to material and producers."

Grierson acknowledges that the multiple-producer system can affect the consistency of an album, but he says that was not a concern with the Turner project.

"The record was tailor-made and everything came together," he says. "The producers were conscious of what they were trying to do. And with this caliber of producers, you know the work they do. That's the reason they're in the project."

Grierson says matching the phenomenal sales of "Private Dancer" may be difficult, "but only time will tell if it will. Personally, I think this album will go five or six cuts deep in terms of hit singles."

Turner is expected to embark on a world tour early next year.

BY LINDA MOLESKI

... While Cyndi Remains Cool To Reprise Pressure

BY STEVEN DUPLER

NEW YORK Almost three years after the release of her Epic debut set, "She's So Unusual," Cyndi Lauper is back with her second album, "True Colors," which debuts on this week's Top Pop Albums chart at No. 42.

Industry eyes are watching closely to see whether she can match the multiplatinum success of her first release, but Lauper and her manager, David Wolff, say they are not feeling any pressure.

"We're not at all afraid of the sophomore slump," says Wolff. "There's not one throwaway track on the album, and the first single has done very well at radio."

The title cut of the album, last week's Power Pick/Sales on the Hot 100 Singles chart, is bulletted this week at No. XXX. Wolff defends the decision to release the ballad as the first single, rather than an upbeat track.

"There was a certain group of people that was surprised we elected to

choose a ballad," says Wolff. "But, it's really a multiformatted song."

"Girls [Just Wanna Have Fun]" helped establish Cyndi's persona, then "Time After Time" deepened that image," he adds. "Now that she's an established star, we felt we could go with a song like 'True Colors,' which has many shades to it."

The glossy, more sophisticated image Lauper is going for with the latest album involves a group effort, on the part of the artist herself, Wolff, and various label staffers.

The campaign for "True Colors"—a project eight months in the making—calls for promotional and marketing angles covering radio, retail, and video, says Epic/Portrait product manager Jude Wilder.

"We're working hand in hand with the label," says Wolff. "Cyndi is very involved in all the marketing and promotion; we're actively protecting her image."

Says Lauper, "We went about it in a different way. This is not your typical ad campaign. It was researched a

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Purple, Crue To Helm Hard Rock Attack; Billy Enjoys Idle Time Before '87 Tour

by Steve Gatt

NEW YORK Watch out for a hard rock bonanza in 1987. Deep Purple and Motley Crue plan to release albums in January, and new product from acts like Scorpions, Whitesnake, Kiss, and Def Leppard is scheduled to follow.

Purple manager Bruce Payne says the band is at Munich's Union Studios completing final mixes for its upcoming PolyGram set, "The House Of Blue Light." Recording sessions were held in Vermont, with bassist Roger Glover producing.

As for live dates, Payne says, "Purple start a European tour at the end of January; it runs through March. Then they'll be over here in the States for about three months."

Doug Thaler, who co-manages Motley Crue with Doc McGhee, says, "The Crue are just about to start recording their new [Elektra] album in L.A.—Tom Werma's producing again—and, if all goes ahead, we should be out in January."

Whitesnake is cutting its second Geffen set in Los Angeles, and Kiss is gearing up to work in New York. Scorpions and Def Leppard are working on new PolyGram albums in Europe.

Top 20 chart showings on this week's Top Pop Albums chart for David Lee Roth, Bon Jovi, and Cinderella prove the ongoing selling power of heavy rock.

One can only hope radio will come to recognize the music's popularity. The success of L.A.'s KNAC and the warm reception accorded the 24-hour Z-Rock format in Chicago are encouraging.

EUROPEAN VACATION: Billy Idol has been idling away his time on the Spanish isle of Majorca, enjoying a brief holiday before the Oct. 15 release of his new Chrysalis album, "Whiplash Smile."

Guitarist Steve Stevens has been sunbathing with the peroxide one. The duo's next stop is London, where potential new members for Idol's road band will be auditioned. Plans call for a major tour to start in March.

FOUR-STRING HERO: Eddie Van Halen will produce and play bass on Sammy Hagar's next Geffen solo set. Van Halen manager Ed Leffler says studio sessions will start in early '87, with the album due for release "sometime next summer."

It's unlikely that Van Halen will release a new album before 1988, but, says Leffler, "It's kind of difficult to speculate at this point."

Meanwhile, Eddie and the boys continue their "4150" U.S. tour through November, with a number of foreign dates being considered for before year's end.

SHORT TAKES I: The Fat Boys have signed to star in a movie called "The Disorderlies" . . .

ON THE BEAT

Artist news, touring, signings, venues . . . for those who need to know

Manhattan Records has set a Nov. 14 release date for the new Grace Jones album, "Inside Story," produced by Nile Rodgers . . . Steve Winwood and Stevie Ray Vaughan guest on James Brown's Dan Hartman-produced "Gravity" album, just out on Scotti Bros. . . . Michael "Maniac" Sembello has been hired to co-write and produce the theme song for Joan Rivers' new late-night TV show . . . B.B. King recently filmed a commercial for the Frito Lay potato chip company . . . Whitney Houston kicks off five U.K. dates Oct. 16. Huey Lewis & the News will play British concerts Oct. 19-29 . . . After becoming national spokesman and honorary chairman of the board for the American Paralysis Assn., Julio Iglesias plans an Oct. 5 benefit concert at San Francisco's Herbst Theatre. A fund-raising dinner will be held at City Hall after the show, with all proceeds going to APA.

STUDIO CALLING: Mick

ROCK FOR REP: A pair of Don Johnson's socks, a Christie Brinkley bathing suit, Michael Des Barres' eyeliner, an autographed David Bowie tuxedo, and a pair of David Lee Roth's tights (the mind boggles!) are among the items reportedly being auctioned Oct. 27 at New York's Limelight club to raise money for the Gotham-based Mirror Repertory Company.

SHORT TAKES II: Congratulations to PolyGram on the debut certification of Cinderella's gold album, "Night Songs." The Philly-based hard rockers are touring with David Lee Roth, whose "Eat 'Em And Smile" has just hit double platinum . . . A-ha's second Warner Bros. album, due at the end of October, is titled "Scoundrel Days" . . . On The Beat ran into Dustin Hoffman on Manhattan's Columbus Avenue a few hours before he was awarded an Emmy for his role in "Death Of A Salesman." Hoffman's recording debut, on the soundtrack for his movie "Ishtar," has been delayed, with the film's release put back to spring of '87 . . . Luther Vandross' upcoming Epic album, "Give Me The Reason," features a duet with Gregory Hines . . . During a brief visit to Billboard's New York office, ex-Dire Straits drummer Pick Withers said he's in town with former Robert Plant bassist Paul Martinez to set up some new projects.

alent

Thompson Is Quintessential Cult Artist

PolyGram Maps Strategy For Critical Fave

BY JEFF TAMARKIN

NEW YORK His tours routinely sell out, his albums consistently top critics' best-of-the-year lists, and fellow musicians often cite the British singer/songwriter/guitarist as an inspiration. After making almost 20 albums—either solo, with his ex-wife, Linda, or with Fairport Convention—without ever having entered the top 100 of Billboard's Top Pop Albums chart, Richard Thompson surely defines the term cult artist.

With the release of his new PolyGram album, "Daring Adventure," Thompson remains skeptical of his own commercial potential. The label, however, plans a full-scale effort to widen Thompson's audience, relying on talent, not tricks, to expand the artist's base.

"I'm afraid it's a fatal flaw of my personality in that I don't think of things in a commercial way," says Thompson. "But the record company has been extremely good

in giving me a lot of line to run with. They haven't hauled me in yet."

PolyGram senior vice president of marketing Harry Anger says, "The fact that Richard Thompson says he's not concerned with being a commercial success doesn't mean he wouldn't accept it if it should come. And from the company's standpoint that means we approach him on the basis that this is an artist who should be heard."

Anger says that because Thompson is known primarily as a live performer, PolyGram will build its campaign around his fall U.S. tour.

"We will attempt to motivate a buying pattern from the tour us-

'I don't think of things in a commercial way'

ing alternative press, keying in on that AOR station in the individual market that plays Richard Thompson, and going after the college market both through college radio and newspapers," says Anger.

"We will be consistently supporting the tour with airplay and targeted time buys keyed in with retailers who are aware of the importance of the artist," adds the label executive. "They generate word-of-mouth themselves, and that is an essential factor with Richard Thompson."

For his part, Thompson says he sees supporting the record with marketing and promotion as a necessary part of the music-making process.

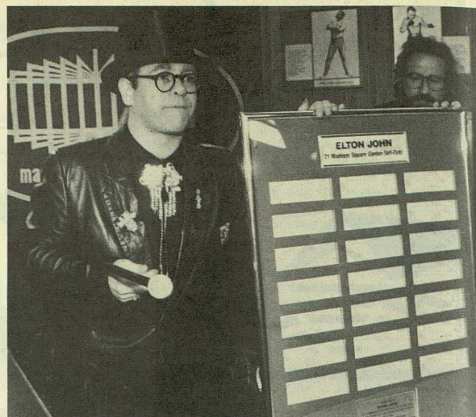
"In this country, particularly, a record has to be marketed, and

people have to be made aware that it's out," says Thompson. "And one of the ways you do that is to talk to people and create a general awareness."

"Besides, sometimes it's interesting to me to talk about what I've done. It helps to clarify what it is that you do in your own eyes."

Thompson says he realizes he is not an artist who will sell singles, noting he would be genuinely surprised if he had a hit single. "But I don't despair of getting radio play," he says. "If the album as a whole was successful I'd be less surprised. I think the record company knows what they've got with me, and they might even be more optimistic than I am."

Says Anger, "As awareness of Richard Thompson has increased, the audience has increased. It's an evolutionary building process. I think Richard is being recognized more and more for his talent, and that's a sign that we're doing a lot better."



Record Breaker. Backstage during his Sept. 11-14 engagement at New York's Madison Square Garden, Elton John was presented with an award for being the first contemporary artist to perform more than 20 times and attract more than 400,000 people to concerts at the venue. (Photo: Chuck Pulin)

Talent in Action

SIMPLY RED

Park West, Chicago

Tickets: \$15

WHEN SIMPLY RED headlined here recently, the elements for a letdown were omnipresent. Riding the crest of a No. 1 summer single, the deliciously melancholy "Holding Back The Years," the group and its improbably soulful lead singer, Mick Hucknall, had been hyped from here to kingdom come. Park West was, appropriately, packed for the occasion, mostly by the type of concertgoers who never miss a Frankie Goes To Hollywood show.

Amazingly enough, though, given the previous track record of next-big-things, Simply Red put on an outstanding show. These nouveau-beat characters from Britain alternately beguiled and energized the crowd with their smooth-yet-gritty, jazzed-up soul, turning in a thoroughly professional set.

With red curls bobbing under a black hat, Hucknall and his husky tenor commanded center stage. He was more than ably backed by the rest of the band:

bassist Tony Bowers, keyboardist Fritz McIntyre, drummer Chris Joyce, guitarist Sylvan Richardson, and trumpeter Tim Kellett. Simply Red's on-stage sound was boosted by backup singer Jannette Sewell and sax player Ian Kirkham.

Hucknall's bluesy self-portrait, "Sad Old Red" (from Simply Red's Elektra debut album, "Picture Book"), was particularly effective, as was the band's cover of the Valentine Brothers' funky indictment of Reaganomics, "Money's Too Tight (To Mention)." Another cover from "Picture Book," Talking Heads' "Heaven," was given an even more gospel-edged reading than on vinyl.

And then, of course, there was "Holding Back The Years," as achingly contemplative as one could wish. If this date was any indication of what's to come, Simply Red has a simply terrific future.

MOIRA McCORMICK

ELTON JOHN

Saratoga Performing Arts Center
Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

Tickets: \$20, \$16, \$12

ELTON JOHN had a little difficulty hitting some of the high notes Aug. 30, when he drew 16,160 fans to SPAC. But the flamboyant pianist and still-compelling singer had no trouble keeping spirits up during a two-hour set.

While oldies like "Philadelphia Freedom," "Bennie And The Jets," and encores of "Your Song" and "Daniel" were wonderful, John seemed to work hardest on songs from the recent "Fire And Ice" album. He also gave a tantalizing glimpse of his upcoming Geffen set, "Leather Jackets." The one new tune was a beauty: a sultry, jet-set bossa nova with

(Continued on next page)

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CYNDI REMAINS COOL

(Continued from page 22)

lot, and we went for a more arty approach."

The video, too, was a "team project," says Lauper, noting that she was involved in every aspect of the production. Music Motions, the leading U.S. distributor of theatrical music shorts, has released the "True Colors" videoclip to 1,000 movie theaters nationwide.

Lauper kicked off an international concert tour Sept. 9 with a series of sellout dates in Japan. From there, she hits Australia and Hawaii, before returning to the U.S. in October. The North American leg of the tour begins Oct. 24 in Troy, N.Y., and runs through the middle of February.

After that, says Wolff, there is nothing definite. "We've been having discussions about a motion picture," he says. "If it happens, it could start shooting in March. Right now, we're just in the advanced talk stages. It would entail a co-starring role in a comedy/adventure film."

Show Spotlights D.C.-Area Musical Diversity

WAMA Awards Set For Oct. 20

BY BILL HOLLAND

WASHINGTON The second annual WAMMIES Awards show, sponsored by the Washington Area Music Assn., will be held Oct. 20 at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, where Hall of Fame Awards will be given to ex-Washingtonian Jimmy Dean and country radio pioneer Connie B. Gay.

The WAMMIE Awards were designed to raise the profile of the local music scene and to high-

light its diversity. Last year, awards were given to Emmylou Harris, Duke Ellington, Patsy Cline, and Marvin Gaye.

Among the performers set to appear at the second awards show are Orleans, Sweet Honey In The Rock, Betty, the Clovers, and go-go champs Experience Unlimited.

Awards will be presented to those voted top Washington-area musicians in categories ranging from best r&b band to best Irish group.